

HB Arnett's

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As a subscriber, you are allowed to access our new blog. You can view it by going to www.cougar-sportsline.blogspot.com

Just a reminder that we are now sending the newsletter via two separate email accounts to help solve distribution issues that many subscribers experienced last year. That means you may receive two identical letters. If that is the case, please just discard the extra.

What Bomb Waits In Vegas?

BYU BOMBS AGAINST WAKE FOREST AND COLORADO STATE

BYU bombed big time against Wake Forest last week. The Cougars, who were hoping for a decent showing on the road against an ACC opponent, were instead bombed and beaten soundly by the Demon Deacons.

The final score was 79-62.

Lee Cumnard and Jimmer Fredette both had 15 points each, but it wasn't nearly enough to combat the quickness of Wake Forest and the sorry shooting by BYU.

The Cougars big three scorers were all dismal from the floor. Trent Plaisted was 3-10, Jonathan Tavernari was 2-11 and Cumnard was 7-17.

A few nights later against CSU, in the Cougars' conference opener, BYU was able to go from seeking shelter from Wake Forest to shellacking the Rams in a 92-73 win.

BYU was able to make CSU look like they did against Wake Forest.

Home Cooking

It is amazing what a little home cooking, much better shooting and a much weaker opponent will do for a team.

Plaisted and Tavernari led the Cougars with 25 points apiece.

The Cougars are now 12-4 overall and 1-0 in conference play.

Now the real fun begins with BYU taking to the road for the next two contests as we find out if the

Cougars are going to be a bomber or a bombee in league play this season.

BYU will face UNLV on Tuesday, Jan. 15 in Las Vegas. The Rebels will not be in a charitable mood when facing the Cougars.

They were bombed themselves last Saturday at Air Force where the very ordinary Falcons upset the Rebels 65-53. UNLV is now also 12-4 on the year.

In our opinion, this is not a BYU vs. UNLV match up, but a Wink Adams vs. Jonathan Tavernari match up.

Shoot It

Both players, Tavernari for BYU and Adams for UNLV, like to shoot it. When they are on, their teams are very good. When they clang it, their teams go down in productivity dramatically.

Both can be very good and both can be very average shooting the ball.

Whoever shoots it the best between these two players will garner a win for their respective team. It's Vegas, so our money is on Adams on his home court.

Saturday will see BYU get their first look at a Jim Boylen coached team at Utah.

He preaches toughness and taking care of the basketball.

That is all nice and good, but this game will also be decided between two players. It comes down to the battle inside against Luke Nevill of Utah and Trent Plaisted of BYU.

History favors Nevill in this one. He has dominated Plaisted in most of their meetings.

BYU needs a split on this two-game road swing to be a contender in the Mountain West Conference.

Their best chance, albeit not a great one, will be in Las Vegas.

BYU BAGS TWO OF BIG THREE

Last week we mentioned that BYU's football recruiting list for this year should be pretty well finalized after this past weekend.

The Cougars not only had almost all of their verbal commitments on campus for an official look see, but they also had three other highly-touted recruits in town for a visit.

BYU had offers on the table to all three. Two of those three said they would be signing with the Cougars after their visits.

Here is a run down of the three recruits we highlighted last week and where they are now with BYU.

Uona Kavienga, LB, 6-0, 225, Leuzinger HS, Lawndale, CA...We had a guy who is almost always right when it comes to recruiting and BYU tell us in early December that BYU was going to sign this big-time linebacker, but BYU coaches wanted to keep this startling development under wraps.

The wraps came off this past weekend when Kavienga publicly committed to sign with BYU on February 6.

Quite frankly, if Kavienga follows through on his commitment, and we expect that to happen, he will be BYU's most high-profile football recruit to sign with the Cougars since Ben Olson.

Kavienga's recruiting stock soared a week ago when he shined at the Under Armour All-American game in Orlando.

Here is what Garry Paskwietz, the publisher of WeAreSC, the premier web site for USC said recently about Kavienga after watching him in the all star game.

"One player who really opened up my eyes in this game was Uona Kavienga, the current UCLA commit who is also considering USC and BYU. In the first half of the game, I thought Uona was the best player on the field. He flies to the ball and his pursuit speed is impressive. He isn't the biggest guy out there but neither was Lofa Tatupu and all Lofa is doing these days is making Pro Bowl teams. It's hard

not to think of Lofa when you watch Kavienga in action. That's who he reminds me of. The rumors around Orlando were definitely positive for the Trojans in terms of Uona and his uncertain status with UCLA. A solid official visit to USC later this month could really seal the deal with this talented player."

Two quotes from Kavienga concerning his commitment to BYU that have appeared in several different places stand out. "One of the reasons I chose them is because BYU brings out the best person that you can be or the best man you can become, and on top of that you can have fun playing football."

The other quote we found interesting said, "I was just tired of fighting the feeling that I knew BYU was the place for me. So I just expressed myself to coach Bronco Mendenhall, and I committed to him and called all the other coaches and informed them that I was coming to BYU."

Speaking of quotes, here is what some opposing high school coaches had to say about Kavienga, who was the Bay League's Defensive player of the year with 145 tackles and eight sacks. His team only allowed 14.8 points per game.

"I'm going to miss watching him on film, but not playing against him," said Palos Verdes coach Pat Fresch, whose team suffered its lone Bay League loss at the hands of Kavienga and Co. "At times, he was pretty much unblockable. When you see this guy on film, you're thinking, 'How are we going to deal with that?' The guy's making plays sideline to sideline, and his greatest asset is his hustle. He's got a nonstop motor that does not stop until the game's over. I don't think there's such a thing as half-speed with him."

Fresch was quoted in a recent story in the Torrance Daily Breeze.

Here is what Kavienga's coach, Deon Toliver said about the linebacker in that same article.

"I'm going to miss him. When you sit back and watch the tapes, and you see all his game-saving tackles, I realized our defense wasn't as good as I thought it was. He made a lot of tackles you don't notice, and if he was not there, those players would've been gone," said Toliver.

"And what I'll miss the most is his special teams because he was our special teams. You snap the ball, and he had everyone scared to touch that ball. They knew he was coming and that he would blow people up as soon as they caught a punt. It was a scary thing to watch us punt."

O'Neill Chambers, WR, 6-3, 205, Harmony HS, St. Cloud, Florida...BYU picked up another verbal commitment from this non LDS athlete over the weekend.

He made the trip to Provo along with his mother. While he has committed, he will milk some publicity out of his choice with an announcement this Thursday at his high school.

His high school coach is Tyler Anderson, a former BYU receiver. The fact that Chambers will make an announcement this Thursday indicates that he will cancel his scheduled recruiting trip to Florida that was set for this coming weekend.

Chambers had 39 catches for 965 yards and 10 TDs this past season.

Hamani Stevens, OL, 6-2, 280, Hemet HS, CA...Of the big three that were on campus this past weekend, Stevens left town without making a choice about his college destination.

He still has it down to Oregon, ASU or BYU and reportedly will make a decision after in-home visits with coaches.

Oregon will be in the home on Tuesday and BYU is set for a Thursday visit. The ASU home visit is still in limbo.

Stevens may wait until his appearance in the SoCal All Star Bowl on Jan. 26 to announce his choice of colleges.

The bowl is actually the inaugural Navy Marine Corps Classic All-Star game that will be played at Cal State Fullerton and features senior stars from Riverside and San Bernardino counties against stars from Orange and San Diego Counties. The game will be televised live on ESPN2 at 2:15 Mountain

Time.

In addition to Stevens, Daniel Sorensen, the defensive back from Colton HS who has committed to the Cougars, will also play on the same team as Stevens.

Regarding his trip this past weekend to BYU, Stevens had some interesting things to say to Greg Biggins in an article he wrote for the Rivals.com Football recruiting site.

"It was a real good trip and I was very comfortable there," Stevens said. "I already knew a lot about BYU since it's the church school and I've been there before. I just really like how straight forward and honest everyone is there.

"With other schools, it almost seems like they're trying to sell you something but BYU isn't like that. Coach Mendenhall isn't like that. He just puts it out there for you and basically says, this is who we are, here is what we can do for you, take it or leave it.

There is no sales job or pressure tactics and I like that a lot. BYU has a strong tradition and I would put them right there in my top three with Oregon and ASU right now."

Plus One...He wasn't included in our big-three recruits of last weekend, but he was big enough to earn a scholarship offer from BYU. Solomone Kafu is definitely big. He is 6-4, 315 pounds and is an offensive lineman for Rio Linda HS in the Sacramento area.

He was offered by BYU and this LDS athlete promptly accepted. Before committing to BYU Kafu only had offers from Sacramento State and UC Davis. Weber State and Nevada also had shown interest.

The low recruiting profile for Kafu was due to the fact that he never attended any recruiting combines or college camps this past summer. He also broke his foot just before the start of his junior season and missed every game except the last one of the season. Consequently there was no junior film for this prospect.

According to reports out of Sacramento, Kafu's early senior season films were ordinary, but by week eight of the season, he was playing extremely well.

He has a 3.8 GPA.

Here is the current commitment list for BYU Football. Letter of Intent can be signed in early February.

Michael Alisa, LB, 6-2, 225, Timpview HS, UT
Kevan Bills, LB, 6-3, 235, Timpview HS, UT
Atem Bol, WR, 6-2, 205, Bell HS, TX
Jerry Bruner, LB, 6-3, 225, Evergreen HS, WA
O'Neill Chambers, WR, 6-3, 205, Harmony HS, FL
Coleby Clawson, LB, 6-3, 225, Snow College, UT (already signed)
Cameron Comer, DB, 6-1, 180, Springville HS, UT
Spencer Hadley, DB, 6-2, 210, Connell HS, WA
Tevita Hola, DL, 6-1, 310, Snow College, UT (already signed)
Austin Holt, TE, 6-5, 235, Bingham HS, UT
Uona Kavienga, LB, 6-0, 225, Leuzinger HS, CA
Solomone Kafu, OL, 6-4, 315, Rio Linda HS, CA
Magnum Mauga, DL, 6-1, 290, Grossmont JC, CA (already signed)
Tolu Moala, LB, 6-1, 230, El Camino CC, CA
Jake Murphy, WR, 6-5, 215, American Fork HS, UT
Garrett Nicholson, DB, 5-10, 180, West HS, UT
Seta Pohahau, RB, 6-0, 200, Aragon HS, CA
Iona Pritchard, LB, 6-1, 225, Bingham HS, UT
Brock Stringham, OL, 6-6, 280, Mountain Vista HS, CO
Jessie Taufi, OL, 6-5, 320, Long Beach CC, CA
Shiloah Te'o, DB, 5-11, 190, Kahuku HS, HI

Masi Tuitama, LB, 6-2, 205, Pacifica HS, CA
Daniel Sorensen, DB, 6-1, 200, Colton HS, CA
Justin Sorensen, K, 6-2, 215, Bingham HS, UT
Michael Yeck, OL, 6-8, 265, Keller HS, TX

RECRUITING REWIND

Last week we mentioned that BYU's biggest name recruit from Utah was Austin Holt, the tight end from Bingham HS. We had several calls from subscribers wanting to know why we didn't mention his teammate from Bingham, Justin Sorensen, the 6-2, 215 pound kicker?

We didn't forget, we just have a hard time with any kicker being a big-time recruit.

Then we remembered how bad the BYU kicking game was last year. We remembered the loss of field position on kickoffs because the ball could never get to the end zone. We also remembered that field goals were rare last season for the Cougars because the probability of making them from outside of PAT range was very low.

After remembering that, we have reconsidered and put Sorensen on our Big Name Utah Recruiting list.

Speaking of big names that nobody remembers, we are probably in the minority, but despite all the hype about high school recruits, we think the best prospect to come out of this class could very well be juco offensive lineman Jesse Taufui. He is the 6-5, 340 pounder from Long Beach City College. He prepped at Carson HS in California, had offers from UNLV and Washington, but couldn't qualify academically.

He went on an LDS mission and enrolled at LBCC. We consider him the next Duece Lutui, the former LDS USC lineman now playing for the Arizona Cardinals.

Fluff And Stuff

Jaime Hill was named the new BYU defensive coordinator last week by Bronco Mendenhall. Hill will be entering his third season as a Cougar defensive coach.

He will still be coaching defensive backs for the Cougars in addition to adding the coordinator responsibilities.

You don't have to know much about football to recognize the outstanding job Hill performed with BYU's secondary in his first two years in Provo.

Mendenhall won't be letting go of the defensive reigns entirely. He will still be making the defensive calls during games.

Hill had been contacted by some other schools about employment and that helped precipitate the move by Mendenhall to insure that Hill remained on the staff.

There is still no word on BYU's non conference schedule for next season. BYU was reportedly ready to announce who the opening game opponent would be last week, but delayed that announcement.

Most speculation hinges on the opponent being a I-AA team.

The other non-conference games for the Cougars are UCLA in Provo and Washington and Utah State on the road.

We also mentioned last week that Xavier Su'a Filo, the big-time 6-4, 270 pound lineman from Timpview HS showed well at a recent national combine in Texas. We said that he already had offers from BYU, LSU and Utah.

A family member contacted us to say that he indeed has offers from the Cougars and Tigers, but the Utes have not yet offered.

BASKETBALL BRIEFS

We have talked about who is coming and going on LDS missions for BYU football, so here is an update on missions for basketball.

Chris Collinsworth, the 6-9 freshman forward for the Cougars received a mission call to the Australia Sydney North Mission. He will leave on April 23.

Returning from LDS mission for next season will be Noah Hartsock, a 6-8 forward from Bartlesville, OK and Jackson Emery, a 6-3 guard from Lone Peak HS in Utah.

Speaking of Lone Peak, that is where Tyler Haws is. He is having a terrific year and solidifying himself as not only the best LDS recruiting prospect in the country, but also is now becoming one of the best prospects in the nation period.

In his last three outings of the new year, Haws has scored 17 against Alta, 29 against Brighton and 24 against American Fork.

Lone Peak takes on Spanish Fork on Tuesday and then has a road game against Pleasant Grove on Friday.

That contest will match Haws against the state's leading scorer, C.J. Wilcox.

Wilcox is averaging 26.4 points per game and Haws is at 21.4 per outing.

TELEVISION TIMETABLE

BYU vs. UNLV

Tuesday, Jan. 15 at Las Vegas

Tipoff: 9:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: Mtn

BYU vs. Utah

Saturday, Jan. 19 at Salt Lake

Tipoff: 2:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: Versus

BYU vs. San Diego State

Wednesday, Jan. 23 at Provo

Tipoff: 6:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: Mtn

BYU vs. New Mexico

Saturday, Jan. 26 at Provo

Tipoff: 4:00 pm Mountain Time

TV: Mtn